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ABSTRACT

This ERIC Digest reviews the development and current status of peace education in the United States. After briefly surveying the peace education movement from its origins with a small group of educators in New England in the 1800s through its stigmatization as being anti-American during periods of hot and cold war, the Digest devotes more attention to recent trends of the 1980s and 1990s. During this period, peace education has taken on a number of forms, including conflict resolution aiming at reducing youth violence, anti-nuclear education, and role playing games, cultural exchanges, and other programs to promote global awareness. Most recently, e-mail and the World Wide Web have been used to promote the exchange of information and ideas. The Digest includes a list of online resources for peace education and a 10-item bibliography of references and ERIC resources. (MLJ)

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BY

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Trends in Peace Education

by Marcia L. Johnson

What Is Peace Education? Peace education curricula generally include instruction in conflict resolution; cooperation and interdependence; global awareness; and social and ecological responsibility. Peace education in the United States has evolved since its early nineteenth century beginnings. In the early years, peace education was promoted by a small group of New England educators, writers, and thinkers who shared a vision of the world without war or violence. Horace Mann, founder of the American common schools, considered violence in American society a flaw that required deliberate improvement and asserted that education should be the primary agent of change.

In the early twentieth century, with America steeped in the militarism surrounding the first and second World Wars, peace education was vilified as being subversive. Peace educators who dreamed of a unified, peaceful world were considered un-American. In fact, these dark years for peace education continued through the following decades, fueled by the excesses of McCarthyism. This stigma greatly hampered the efforts of peace educators who overcame this setback by shifting their focus from negative peace, expressed as anti-militarism, to positive peace, with an emphasis on society-building through diminishing violence within and between nation-states. Still, whatever the generational focus, peace education has consistently reflected the desire to improve the condition of human society.

Peace Education in the 1980s. Peace education in the '80s took the form of "conflict resolution." In an effort to address issues surrounding youth, such as school violence and high drop out rates, young people were taught communication and negotiation strategies as part of student mediation initiatives. These programs included such elements as training in cross-cultural issues, interpersonal communication, and bias awareness with the belief that individuals must understand the nature of conflict and develop negotiating skills before the process of mediation can be effective.

Under the threat of nuclear war and planetary annihilation, peace education in the '80s saw a proliferation of curriculum guides and teaching materials targeted at children from preschool through high school in an effort to avoid Earth's destruction. Curricular guides for younger children included nature study and care for the environment, teaching children that they can be responsible for the world they live in. Materials for older children included activity cards and videos presenting conflict scenarios aimed at teaching students to identify possible problems, to play roles, and to propose solutions. Educators began to see peace education not only as content, but also as a process–a way of life that promotes personal and societal well being.

In this decade, religious leaders across the denominational spectrum, making great efforts to unify common beliefs and decrease doctrinal differences, wrote and spoke extensively concerning the immorality of nuclear war, imploring congregations throughout America to consider alternatives to violence and war and to embrace peaceful coexistence. This leadership from the religious sector contributed hugely to a wider acceptance of peace education as a legitimate discipline for study in the schools.

Advances in technology and telecommunications made it possible to reach out internationally with gestures of goodwill and world friendship. Global awareness became an integral part of mainstream education. Educators believed that the study of cultures, customs, and beliefs of people around the world would enable students to appreciate differences, to discover similarities, and to develop empathy for others–all necessary skills for creating a harmonious society. Global awareness became peace education in action.

Peace Education in the 1990s. Within the current trend of curriculum integration, peace education has spread across the curriculum, providing opportunities for students to tackle vital issues from numerous perspectives. Educators in the '90s continue to use technology to engage students in a variety of activities to foster international/intercultural understanding. Telecommunications have become a common tool to link students from different ethnic or cultural groups for work on academic projects and cultural exchange. Increasingly, students and educators are accessing the World Wide Web for content information, classroom use, and preparation of lessons and materials. Through the Internet, school children around the globe are learning from and about each other while educators are planning lessons and developing professional relationships with their international counterparts.

Many organizations offer opportunities for developing cultural awareness firsthand through e-mail communication. Friendship exchanges between countries, especially former enemies, have been coined as Transitional Citizen Peacemaking (TCP), communication between private citizens of different countries with the intention of increasing mutual understanding and world peace. These TCP efforts constitute an alternative to nation-state diplomacy, providing a means of nonviolent social intervention based on the belief that goals can be achieved through social power.

The '90s also have seen a proliferation of educational games to enhance student awareness. "The Conflict Resolution Game" allows participants to assume the roles of conflicting nations, to devise ways to co-exist, and to develop mutually strong economies while maintaining national security. "Balance of Power" is a simulation game where participants respond to world crisis without provoking nuclear war.

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In the '90s, teaching respect and tolerance for those who are different has become a primary educational focus. Peace education has moved well beyond the utopian dreams of its nineteenth century founders to realize very practical applications for the coming century.

Online Resources for Peace Education and Conflict Resolution.

Atrium Society. Peace education resources, newsletter, bookstore. Site feature: Bullying. *http://www.atriumsoc.org/*

Bucks County Peace Centers. Library of peace education/conflict resolution materials, annotated list of peace education programs, plus a checklist for stereotyping awareness. *http://www.comcat.com/~peace/PeaceCenter.html*

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. Blueprints for Prevention, database, facts and statistics. *http://www.colorado.edu/csvp*

Educators for Social Responsibility. Resolving Conflict Creatively Program. Strategies and guidelines to create peace and confront prejudice; instructional books, videos, and activities. *http://www.benjerry.com/esr/index.html*

Indian Hill Primary School Kids Peace Museum. Child-created exhibit galleries with art and writings with peace themes. *http://www.ih.k12.oh.us/ps/peace*

PeaceJam. Introduction to the lives of the heroes of peace. *http://theodore-sturgeon.MIT.EDU:8001/peacejam/index.html*

People for Peace. Activities for peace education, conflict resolution, online KidsCare!, Story Center, and Penpals for Peace. *http://www.kids4peace.com*

United States Institute of Peace. Articles on global peace issues, directory of funded projects, links to other peace organizations, publication reviews. *http://www.usip.org/*

World Wise Schools. Integrates global education into daily activities, including lesson plans for grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12. *http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/dp/wws1.html*

References and ERIC Resources. The following list of resources includes references used to prepare this Digest. The items followed by an ED number are available in microfiche and/or paper copies from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). For information about prices, contact EDRS, 7420 Fullerton Road, Suite 110, Springfield, Virginia 22153-2852; telephone numbers are (703) 440-1400 and (800) 443-3742. Entries followed by an EJ number, annotated monthly in CURRENT INDEX TO JOURNALS IN EDUCATION (CIJE), are not available through EDRS. However, they can be located in the journal section of most larger libraries by using the information provided or requested through interlibrary loan.

Arnow, Jan. TEACHING PEACE: HOW TO RAISE CHILDREN TO LIVE IN HARMONY--WITHOUT FEAR, WITHOUT PREJUDICE, WITHOUT VIOLENCE. New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1995. ED 388 896.

Bjerstedt, Ake, ed. "Multicultural Education: Bias Awareness, Empathy, and Transcultural Identities: A Selective Bibliography." Malmo, Sweden: Lund University Department of Educational and Psychological Research, 1995. ED 401 753.

Hinitz, Blythe F. and Aline Stomfay-Stitz. "Cyberspace: A New Frontier for Peace Education." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, March 1997. ED NUMBER TO BE ASSIGNED.

Hinitz, Blythe F. and Aline Stomfay-Stitz. "Dream of Peace: To Dare to Stay the Violence, To Do the Work of the Peacemaker." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Childhood Education International, Minneapolis, MN, April 11-13, 1996. ED 394 733.

Jeffries, Rhonda B. and Ian M. Harris. "Peace Education: Cooling The Climate of Schools." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association, New York, April 8-12, 1996. ED 407 304.

Kreidler, William J. ELEMENTARY PERSPECTIVES 1: TEACHING CONCEPTS OF PEACE AND CONFLICT. Cambridge, MA: Educators for Social Responsibility, 1990. ED 370 873.

Stomfay-Stitz, Aline M. "Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation: Pathways to Safer Schools." CHILDHOOD EDUCATION 70 (1994): 279-82. EJ 488 453.

Stomfay-Stitz, Aline M. and Blythe F. Hinitz. "Integration/Infusion of Peace Education into Early Childhood Education Programs." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, April 8-12, 1996. ED 390 565.

Stomfay-Stitz, Aline M. and Blythe F. Hinitz. "Integration of Peace Education Into Multicultural Education/Global Education." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA, April 18-22, 1995. ED 396 816.

Stomfay-Stitz, Aline M. "Education, Psychology, and Social Science: Common Pathways for Teaching Peace." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, New York, August 12, 1995. ED 407 307.

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